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## Afghanistan: Political Exiles in Search of a State

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When Afghan exiles in Pakistan convened a *shura* (council) in Islamabad to choose an interim government on February 10, 1989, they were only the most recent of exiles who have aspired and often managed to "rule" Afghanistan. The seven parties of the Islamic Union of Mujahidin of Afghanistan who had convened the *shura* claimed that, because of their links to the mujahidin fighting inside Afghanistan, the cabinet they named was an "interim government" rather than a "government-in-exile," but they soon confronted the typical problems of the latter: how to obtain foreign recognition, how to depose the sitting government they did not recognize, and how to replace the existing opposition mechanisms inside and outside the country.

### Exiles in Afghan History

The importance of exiles in the history of Afghanistan derives largely from the difficulty of state formation in its sparsely settled and largely barren territory. Especially after much of the complex irrigation networks and urban settlements were destroyed by Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century, Afghanistan was primarily a mountainous borderland at the intersection of the imperial territories of Iran, Turkic Central Asia, and India. State formation in Afghanistan generally required access to the resources of these richer areas.

The population was largely tribal, and the divisiveness of tribal and clan feuds also made it difficult for a leader to emerge over too large a segment of the society. Aspiring leaders often made their careers through service to the neighboring empires, where their highlanders' cavalry skills were much in demand.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the founder of the Afghan monarchy in 1747, Ahmad Shah Durrani, started his career in the Afghan horse of the Persian emperor Nadir Shah. While his service outside the borders of present-day Afghanistan — which did not exist as a political unit at that time — was not exile, the use to which he put his access to external resources illustrates one of the factors accounting for the importance of exiles in Afghanistan's political history. Ahmad Shah's seizure of much of Nadir Shah's treasury after the latter's assassination did much to establish his power

after his election as king at a tribal *jirga* (council) and set him on his way to equipping an army. He then embarked on conquest and raids of the territories of the declining Mughal empire. He supported his rule mainly with resources derived from taxing the rich agricultural areas of Punjab and Kashmir.<sup>2</sup>

As the Russian and British empires advanced toward Afghanistan in the nineteenth century, they introduced the institutions of the modern state system. Both used exile and support for exiles as political tools. The two greatest rulers of nineteenth century Afghanistan, Amir Dost Mohammad Khan (reigned 1826-1839, 1843-1863) and Amir Abd-ur-Rahman Khan (reigned 1880-1901), ascended to the throne after periods of exile, the former in British India, the latter in Russian Central Asia.<sup>3</sup>

The First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-1842) began when the British installed an Afghan exile, Shah Shuja, on the throne of Kabul, forcing his rival, Amir Dost Mohammad Khan, into exile in India. After Shah Shuja was overthrown and the British garrison massacred by the tribes during its retreat to Jalalabad, the British allowed Dost Mohammad Khan to return to Kabul and resume the throne.<sup>4</sup>

The Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-1880) likewise ended with the assumption of the throne by a former exile, Amir Abd-ur-Rahman Khan, who, despite, or perhaps because of, his twelve-year exile in Russian-governed Samarkand and Tashkent, greatly distrusted the Russians and became a firm ally of Britain. It was during his reign (1880-1901) that Afghanistan entered the modern state system as a demarcated nation-state with recognized domestic sovereignty. Amir Abd-ur-Rahman Khan, however, ceded control of his foreign relations to the British. In return for this concession, the British gave the Amir a yearly subsidy in cash and weapons which enabled him to crush the 40 revolts against his rule, 10 of which took on the magnitude of civil wars.<sup>5</sup>

The Amir continued the practice, begun by the British, of using foreign exile as a tactic in dealing with political rivals.<sup>6</sup> While lesser opponents might expect any of a variety of sadistic Central Asian punishments,<sup>7</sup> prominent *sardars* (tribal leaders) of the Mohammadzai royal clan who had supported rival claimants to the throne or otherwise opposed him were forced to live abroad. Among the exiled *sardars*, who were subsequently readmitted to Afghanistan by either Abd-ur-Rahman or his son and successor, Amir Habibullah Khan (1901-1919), were two families that subsequently played vital roles in Afghanistan's politics: the Tarzis and the Musahiban.

The Tarzis lived in Damascus, then under Ottoman rule,



and the Musahiban in British India. Ghulam Mohammad Tarzi, a prominent poet, and his son, Mahmud Beg Tarzi, also traveled to France and Egypt.<sup>8</sup> The Musahiban, including Nadir Khan (who became king in 1929) and his four brothers, subsequently spent most of the 1920s in a second exile in France. These exiles were exposed to Western culture, politics, and technology, from which Afghanistan was then quite isolated. Both the Tarzis and the Musahiban played important roles in the introduction to Afghanistan of the ideology of "modernization" which they had imbibed during their years abroad.

Mahmud Beg Tarzi developed Islamic modernism in Afghanistan and gathered around him an elite group known as the "Young Afghans," after the Young Turks. His most influential follower was his son-in-law, King Amanullah Khan (1919-1928), the son of Amir Habibullah Khan, who managed to seize the throne when his father was assassinated in 1919. Tarzi initially served Amanullah as Foreign Minister, but resigned in 1925 in disagreement with what he viewed as his son-in-law's overly hasty imposition of the modernist ideas they shared on Afghanistan's tribal, Islamic society. A combination of tribal and fundamentalist revolts drove both Amanullah and Tarzi into exile in 1929. Tarzi died in Istanbul in 1933; Amanullah died in Rome in 1960.<sup>9</sup>

Besides his more important reforms, Amanullah also introduced diplomatic exile into the repertory of Afghan political tactics. Amanullah's declaration of complete independence for Afghanistan, formalized in a treaty with Britain after the Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919), enabled him to found Afghanistan's diplomacy. When a rift developed between him and the Musahiban in 1924, he appointed Nadir Khan, who previously had commanded his armed forces, as ambassador to France. Nadir Khan soon resigned and lived on the Riviera until the overthrow of Amanullah provided him and his brothers with an opportunity to return to Afghanistan.

In January 1929 Kabul had fallen to a Tajik guerrilla leader named Habibullah<sup>10</sup> who ruled as Amir of Afghanistan for nine months with the support of some fundamentalist clergy and ethnic minorities. Pashtun tribal forces led by Nadir Khan ousted him the following October. Like all exiles from landlocked Afghanistan Nadir required at least the acquiescence of those who controlled the surrounding territories. Nadir received somewhat more than that from the British. They instructed their agents in the border areas to allow not only his passage but that of tribal forces from the Indian side of the frontier, who formed part of the army Nadir led into Kabul. As previously in Afghanistan, the



quasi-military social organization of the tribes obviated the exiles' need for any differentiated political organization. Nadir Khan, like Abd-ur-Rahman Khan and Dost Mohammad Khan before him, used his political skills and tribal kinship links to step into the political void left at the top by the fissiparousness of the segmentary lineage system among the tribes.

Upon his assassination in 1933 by a servant of the rival Charkhi family, Nadir Shah (as Nadir Khan was known as king) was succeeded by his son Mohammad Zahir Khan, who then became known as Mohammad Zahir Shah. The nineteen-year-old boy was left to himself while his uncles ran the kingdom. In 1953 his cousin Daoud,<sup>11</sup> the Minister of Defense and former military commander, took over as Prime Minister in a palace coup. Daoud ruled for ten years, and that decade saw accelerated attempts at "modernization," including the training and equipping of a modern army by the Soviet Union and the expansion of the educational system with aid from several foreign countries, including the U.S., France, Egypt, West Germany, and the USSR. Daoud was forced to resign in 1963, and Zahir Shah inaugurated ten years of attempted constitutional rule. During this period there were two parliamentary elections, and the royal family was not permitted to participate in politics.

In 1973 Daoud overthrew his cousin with the help of leftist army and air force officers, including members of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a pro-Soviet Marxist-Leninist party that had been founded in 1965. This was Afghanistan's first full-fledged military coup organized by professional officers, and it marked the entry onto the political stage of the new intelligentsia produced by the expansion of education and state employment since 1953. Daoud proclaimed Afghanistan a Republic with himself as President.

By this time, after ten years of relative freedom and forty years without a serious challenge to the power of the ruling dynasty, virtually all Afghan political exiles had returned home, including the remains of King Amanullah, which had been entombed with honors in Jalalabad. The 1973 coup, however, once again created exiles whose struggles eventually came to dominate Afghan politics.

### **Exiles from Daoud's Republic of Afghanistan**

The first exile from Daoud's Republic was Zahir Shah himself. Daoud staged his coup while Zahir was in Italy, and the latter stayed there. He has lived in a modest villa outside of Rome since that time. Until Daoud was overthrown and killed in 1978 by the same officers who had helped him to power in 1973, he

sent a stipend to his deposed cousin. Thereafter Zahir Shah has reportedly been supported by the Saudi royal family. His cousin and son-in-law, Abdul Wali Khan, who had been commander of the army's Central Forces, including the Kabul garrison, at the time of the coup, was allowed by Daoud to join him after being imprisoned for two years. Today Zahir Shah remains one of Afghanistan's most prominent political exiles, and Abdul Wali, who acts as his gatekeeper, is suspected of wishing to be his successor as well. From 1973 to 1978 a few other former officials and dignitaries of the royal regime, virtually all of whom had Western educations, also emigrated to Europe and the United States, where they acted more as immigrants than exiles.

From 1973 to 1983 Zahir Shah made no public statements about Afghanistan and behaved more like a retired king than an active political exile.<sup>12</sup> Another group that fled Daoud, however, immediately began planning their struggle. These were the leaders of Afghanistan's nascent Islamist ("fundamentalist") movement, who saw Daoud's republic as infiltrated by Communists and Soviet agents. Under the name of the Muslim Youth (Jawanan-e Musulman), this movement had gained influence among students at Kabul University, especially in the theology, engineering, and polytechnic faculties. Its members had demonstrated against the royal regime, which they considered un-Islamic and overly influenced by the Soviet Union. Together with their mentors from the Theology Faculty who led a more secret group called Jamiat-e Islami-e Afghanistan (the Islamic Society of Afghanistan), they fled to Pakistan in 1973 and 1974 and took up residence in the city of Peshawar. Among them were Gulbud-din Hekmatyar, Burhanuddin Rabbani, Ahmad Shah Massoud, and Mawlawi Yunus Khales.<sup>13</sup>

These exiles, who then had little support or organization inside Afghanistan, set about the search for foreign shelter and support. The Pakistani government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto agreed to grant them asylum and military training. This was the beginning of the powerful ties which continue to bind the Islamists (and now all of the Pakistan-based mujahidin) to the Pakistani directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the agency that has dealt with them since that time. According to Gen. Nasrullah Babur, Bhutto's governor of the Northwest Frontier Province and key link man with the Afghan exiles, the CIA also assisted in supporting them.<sup>14</sup>

Bhutto, a highly secularized populist leader, did not support the Afghan Islamists out of ideological sympathy. Pakistan, however, had just lived through the trauma of losing its Eastern Wing when Indian military intervention completed what



Bengali ethnic disaffection and violent state repression had begun. The predominantly Pashtun NWFP was also a site of ethnic resentment against the Pakistani state. The latter had inherited the conflict from the British, who had formalized the separation of that area from Afghanistan as part of the settlement of the Second Anglo-Afghan War.

The government of Afghanistan, and, with particular fervor, Daoud, had never recognized the Durand Line between the NWFP and Afghanistan as an international boundary. Afghanistan claimed that the Pashtun areas of Pakistan (which the Afghan government called Pashtunistan) should have the option of independence or union with Afghanistan. When Daoud took power in 1973, he resumed his militancy on the Pashtunistan question, which Zahir Shah had muted. Bhutto and Babur saw in the Afghan Islamist exiles a force they could use to counter Daoud's pressures and bring him to negotiate an end to the dispute. At the same time, they foresaw that with the overthrow of the Afghan monarchy by Soviet-trained army officers, Afghanistan might be entering a period of instability and external intervention, and they wanted Pakistan to have some assets in the coming struggle. Not only did they train and arm the Islamists, they began a program of intensified road-building up to the Afghan border, which today allows Pakistani military trucks to supply the mujahidin.

The Afghan Islamists also sought aid from foreign sources likely to be more sympathetic to them ideologically. In 1974 Burhanuddin Rabbani, a former lecturer at Kabul University's Theology Faculty and the leader ("Amir") of Jamiat-e Islami, traveled from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia to seek support for the Afghan Islamic cause. Rabbani, like many of the teachers on the Theology Faculty, had been educated at Cairo's Al-Azhar University, where he had come into contact with the Muslim Brotherhood, some of whose members (now political exiles from Egypt themselves) worked for the Saudi-sponsored World Muslim League (*Rabitat al-'Alam al-Islami*, often known as *Rabita*). It is unclear whether Rabbani succeeded in attracting any official aid at that time, but he may have begun the relationship which still continues between the Afghan Islamists and private Saudi religious organizations and donors.

While Rabbani was in Saudi Arabia, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar apparently began to organize his own followers separately. Hekmatyar, a Pashtun, eventually led most of the Pashtun Islamists into a separate organization, the Hezb-e Islami (Islamic Party), while Rabbani, a Tajik, remained the leader of a now predominantly Tajik Jamiat. Massoud, who is now Jamiat's most

famous commander, seems to have joined Hezb initially, although he is a Tajik from Panjsher.

Besides the ethnic difference, which was never articulated in public, Hekmatyar and Rabbani split over strategy. Hekmatyar agreed to the Pakistani proposal to set off an immediate insurrection, which Bhutto hoped would bring Daoud to negotiate. (His goal was to exert pressure, not give the Islamists the capability of winning any significant victories.) Rabbani argued that such a move was premature, as more political work needed to be done. In July 1975, some of the Islamists tried to stage an uprising, which came to be known as the Panjsher Valley incident, after the only area where it had any significant impact. Even in Panjsher, however, the insurgents were quickly defeated, as the population did not respond to their calls. Those who escaped capture (93 were arrested), including Massoud, returned to Pakistan, where they continued to be maintained by the ISI and perhaps the CIA.<sup>15</sup>

### **Exiles from the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan I: PDPA Factional Exiles**

The coup of April 27, 1978 (known to its supporters as the "Saur Revolution," after the Persian zodiacal month of Saur, or Taurus, in which it occurred) led to the establishment by decree of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA). This coup by leftist army officers, who quickly turned over power to the leadership of the PDPA, greatly enhanced the stature of the existing Islamist exiles and created new groups of exiles, including less radical Sunni Islamic leaders, Shi 'a leaders who generally fled to Iran, traditional nationalist leaders, a broad spectrum of the intellectuals, and members of various defeated factions of the PDPA. In addition, it began the flow of refugees who today total over 5 million of Afghanistan's estimated population of about 15.5 million.

The PDPA was badly factionalized from its beginning; two years after its founding it split into the PDPA-*Khalq* (masses), led by Nur Mohammad Taraki, and the PDPA-*Parcham* (flag), led by Babrak Karmal. *Khalqis* were mainly first-generation educated tribal Pashtuns of rural origin, while *Parchamis* were ethnically mixed urbanites, generally of higher social status and education.<sup>16</sup> The *Parchamis* had supported Daoud's 1973 coup and initially participated in his government. Daoud soon removed them from high positions, but they remained at lower levels, including in the officer corps. The two factions reunited rather tenuously under Soviet pressure in 1977 and carefully shared



positions in the government that took over after the 1978 coup.

During the entire period of the party's existence as an open secret (1965-1978, when there were no laws legalizing the existence of political parties in Afghanistan), while some party members and leaders were arrested, none were forced into exile. Its leaders were well-known members of Kabul society, although the extent of its membership, especially inside the armed forces and the government bureaucracy, was a closely guarded secret. Once the factional leaders had taken power and thus had access to means of repression, they quickly made up for the relative tolerance they had previously enjoyed by vigorously attacking each other.

By July the Khalqis had removed all Parchamis from the government and party leadership. While lesser Parchamis were arrested, tortured, and even killed, the leading Parchamis were sent into diplomatic exile, mostly to Warsaw Pact countries.<sup>17</sup> After plans for a Parchami coup were allegedly discovered in August, these six were expelled from the party and ordered home, but instead they disappeared for some time, most of them to Moscow.

Little has been revealed of the activities of the Parchami exiles in Moscow in 1978-1979, but it appears that they heavily lobbied the leadership of the CPSU, mainly through the international department of the Central Committee, arguing that the Khalqis, and especially their ultra-radical organization man, Hafizullah Amin, were leading the Saur Revolution to disaster. Babrak and his followers did not constitute themselves officially as a government-in-exile, but they acted like one. They claimed to their foreign sponsor, the USSR, that they were the rightful leaders of Afghanistan and the PDPA and urged Soviet action to remove the usurper Amin. They wished, however, to avoid the stigma of openly being installed by a foreign power. The first plan they and the Soviets developed involved an anti-Amin alliance between Babrak, still in Moscow, and Taraki. This ended with the arrest and secret execution of Taraki in September 1979, after which Amin openly assumed supreme power.

Finally, Babrak returned to Kabul at the end of December 1979 after Soviet troops had deposed and killed Amin. While he claimed to have been chosen as party leader in a secret meeting inside Afghanistan, a meeting which supposedly also decided on the overthrow and execution of Amin, Babrak's behavior was in fact that of a classic leader of a government-in-exile. He broadcast an invitation to Soviet troops from Dushanbe, Soviet Tajikistan, and entered Kabul with his entourage three days later.<sup>18</sup> He then established himself as General Secretary of the PDPA and

President of the Revolutionary Council, placing his Parchaimi former fellow exiles in key positions. Najibullah, in particular, became head of the reorganized secret police, now known as KhAD, the State Information Services, the regime's most important and effective agency.

Some Khalqi leaders who were neither arrested nor killed were subsequently sent into diplomatic exile.<sup>19</sup> Khalq was now divided into pro-Amin and pro-Taraki factions, however, and the leader of the pro-Taraki faction, Sayyed Mohammad Gulabzoi, was named Minister of the Interior, in which post he commanded his own security force and engaged at times in nearly open war with Najibullah's KhAD.

Gulabzoi himself was sent into exile as ambassador to Moscow in November 1988 as part of Najibullah's political preparations for the Soviet troop withdrawal, which was completed on February 15, 1989. The preparations for that withdrawal had begun in March 1986, when Babrak Karmal had been informed in Moscow during the CPSU Congress that he would be replaced as PDPA General Secretary by Najibullah. In November he also lost his position as President of the Revolutionary Council, and the next month Najibullah announced the plan for "national reconciliation," a program for power sharing with the resistance which Babrak had apparently resisted. These moves precipitated a factional split in Parcham between pro-Babrak and pro-Najibullah factions, and Babrak as well as some of his closest collaborators were ultimately sent into exile in the USSR, where Soviet dissidents reported sighting him in Moscow restaurants.

Other PDPA opponents of national reconciliation have been sent into obscure diplomatic exile, such as Ismail Dānesh, who had to endure the insult of being appointed second secretary of the Afghan Embassy in Libya. Gulabzoi lost his post when Najibullah and the Soviets had apparently agreed that, after the Soviet withdrawal, the PDPA could no longer afford open factionalism.<sup>20</sup> He was reportedly taken from his house at night by Soviet soldiers and escorted by them to the airport, where they put him on a plane for Moscow. Before his exile, he had traveled at least twice to Moscow to argue that he and the Khalqis would be better suited to take over the government and stand on their own against the mujahidin after the Soviet withdrawal. The author knows of no indications that he has continued this campaign since being appointed ambassador.

### **Exiles from the DRA II: Mujahidin and their Sponsors**

Inside Afghanistan, the Khalqi policy of imposing revolu-



tionary change by decree backed up by violent repression led to revolts which were often unconnected to exile politics.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, the cycle of revolt and repression both changed the status of the existing exiles and brought many new groups of refugees, some of whom became politically active. The local leaders of relatively spontaneous army mutinies or village uprisings needed weapons and political representation; the hundreds of thousands, then millions, of village refugees needed intermediaries with the authorities of the host countries. These were needs the exiles could meet, at the cost of striking deals with those who supplied them.

The new exiles included members or sympathizers of the Islamist groups who had remained in Afghanistan. Many of these took up permanent residence in Pakistan or Iran, but others returned to Afghanistan with weapons to lead the fronts of *jihad*. One small movement of this group back to Afghanistan included a few of the veterans of the 1975 uprising, including Massoud and his close associate, Mohammad Es'haq, who returned to Panjsher in order to apply the political and military lessons they had learned from their previous failures.

The Islamists hardly represented the totality of the religious establishment in Afghanistan, but the atheistic fervor of the Khalqis spared no one. More traditional religious leaders who had not challenged the legitimacy of the royal regime or of President Daoud, whatever their misgivings about certain policies, soon fled for their lives and joined their more radical colleagues in exile. The Sunni leaders went to Pakistan and the Shi 'a leaders, representing a minority sect in Afghanistan, to Iran, especially Qom. Among the prominent Sunni leaders were Sayed Ahmad Gailani, the leader of the Qadiri Sufi sect in Afghanistan, and Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, a prominent religious scholar and former parliamentary deputy from Logar province. They were joined in Pakistan by a member of one of what was, along with the Gailanis, one of the two most prominent religious families in Afghanistan, Hazrat Sibghatullah Mojaddedi. The Mojaddedis were the leaders of the main branch of the Naqshbandi Sufi sect in Afghanistan and had traditionally played important political roles; they proclaimed the Islamic legitimacy of the country's rulers and acted as mediators between the court and the tribes in time of crisis. Most of the male members of the family were killed by the Khalqi government in February 1979, but Sibghatullah, who had remained in exile as head of the Saudi-funded Islamic Center in Copenhagen, survived along with those members of the family who had joined him in Denmark.<sup>22</sup> These three leaders became the heads of the three

parties of the Afghan resistance which variously came to be known as "moderate," "traditionalist," or "nationalist."

Besides these religious leaders, the waves of arrests and killings of members of the educated elite who were suspected of opposition to the PDPA drove increasing numbers of that class into exile. Many of these intellectuals either had a secular orientation or were Islamic modernists in the tradition of Tarzi. In Kabul they had opposed the Islamists, who protested the moderate Westernizing policies of the Musahiban monarchy. Among them were surviving former ministers of the constitutionalist period (many others of these ministers disappeared in the Khalqi prisons), some of whom had at times tried to establish political parties or clubs, generally with a nationalist or moderate modernist complexion. They resented the prominence given by the Pakistanis and other donors to the religious figures, especially the Islamists, and many of them subsequently emigrated to Western countries.

Most numerous, however, were the uneducated peasants and others who were victims of the government's (and later the USSR's) policies of massive reprisals against civilians. For instance, many of the inhabitants of Herat fled to Iran after the uprising and ensuing battle in that city in February 1979.<sup>23</sup> Many tribes of Paktia fled to Pakistan after a government offensive there in September 1979. Some tribes retroactively justified their emigration on the grounds that now that Afghanistan was ruled by *kafers* (unbelievers) it was their religious duty to undertake *hijra* (emigration) to an Islamic territory, on the model of Mohammad's emigration from pre-Islamic Mecca to Medinah.

### **The Establishment of Exile Mujahidin Organizations**

As these groups struggled to organize themselves on foreign, mainly Pakistani, territory, to obtain the various types of assistance they needed, and to build or consolidate links with the internal resistance, ideologies and foreign patronage interacted with factional, personal, and ethnic loyalties. After the direct Soviet military intervention of December 1979, the resistance and refugee organizations began to assume the forms they have retained to this day. The Soviet intervention both accelerated the flow of refugees of all types (including thousands of surviving prisoners who had been released in an early attempt by the regime to distance itself from the former government's repressions) and intensified the interest of foreign powers in the conflict.

Each leader (or would-be leader) tried to construct his own network, using his links to various groups and whatever



resources he could extract from various patrons. One peculiar route to the formation of an organization was taken by three of the leaders who were eventually recognized by Pakistan: they were chosen as compromise candidates for the leadership of a coalition, largely because they had no organization of their own to threaten the coalition's members, and used this position to turn the coalition into a separate organization with themselves as the leader.<sup>24</sup>

It was ultimately the Afghan cell of the Pakistan military government, consisting of Gen. Zia-ul-Haq (then Chief Martial Law Administrator) and some generals close to him as well as the leadership of the ISI, who decided which Afghan political forces would be recognized. They decided from the beginning that explicitly pro-royalist or tribal forces, associated with the Pash-tunistan demand, would play no role. They did not want to channel weapons and other aid through Afghan nationalists who might appeal to Pakistani Pashtun dissidents. Instead they preferred parties with an explicitly religious orientation, and among those, the parties closest to the ISI and the Pakistani Islamist organization, the Jama'at-e Islami, the only party in Pakistan to offer qualified support to the military regime. (In this respect, the choice was also dictated by the quest for domestic and international legitimacy of the then isolated regime of Gen. Zia).

Initially, in 1980-81, they settled on six parties. Three were derived from the old Islamist exiles, the Hezb of Gulbuddin, a breakaway faction also called Hezb-e Islami led by Mawlawi Yunus Khales, and Rabbani's Jamiat. Three more parties represented more traditional forms of Islam, Mojaddedi's National Liberation Front, Gailani's National Islamic Front of Afghanistan, and Mohammadi's Islamic Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan.

A seventh party was subsequently recognized after the parties formed a brief coalition called the Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan. As head of this alliance, from which the three traditionalist parties soon withdrew, the parties agreed upon Abd-ur-Rabb-ur-Rasul Sayyaf, a former lecturer from Kabul University's Theology Faculty.<sup>25</sup> Sayyaf's main qualification was that he spoke excellent Arabic and sometimes (depending on his audience) professed to follow the Wahhabi sect of Islam favored by the Saudi monarchy. He was therefore a formidable fundraiser in the Gulf. He used his talents, however, to build up his own organization, despite the near universal hostility of Afghans to Wahhabism. His party, of course, is the Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan.

The ISI consistently favored the Islamists over the traditionalists and the Hezb of Hekmatyar over the other Islamists, for a combination of reasons: the former had longstanding ties to the ISI and were deemed to be more controllable; the Islamists and especially Hezb were supposedly more effective and better disciplined; and the Jama 'at-e Islami politically favored those parties on ideological grounds, while the military felt more confident that they would not raise the nationalist Pashtunistan issue. Sayyaf has further enjoyed immense Arab financial backing, which has enabled him, alone of all the parties, to pay wages to his mujahidin. The Saudi Red Crescent also paid the entire costs of transporting heavy weapons into Afghanistan for the Islamist parties, but only a portion (given by one source as 15 percent) for the traditionalist parties.<sup>26</sup>

Until 1985 there were two alliances: one of the Islamists, which existed only on paper, and one of the traditionalists, which actually had a joint office in Peshawar and even promoted some joint organizations inside Afghanistan, especially in the deeply traditional tribal areas along the Pakistan border. By May 1985, however, the Pakistani and American sponsors of these organizations had decided that in order to increase the diplomatic and political pressure on the Soviet Union it was necessary for the mujahidin to form a single alliance capable of representing them abroad. They finally succeeded in pressuring the seven groups to form a coalition called the Islamic Union of Mujahidin of Afghanistan.<sup>27</sup> The existing moderate alliance office was closed, and each of the seven parties retained its pre-existing structure. The leaders of the seven parties rotated three-month terms as spokesman. Decisions were taken by consensus, which is to say they were often not taken, unless the ISI representative who always attended the meeting absolutely insisted.

The ISI and CIA never tried to make this coalition take over the most important function — transferring weapons into Afghanistan — from the parties. The State Department and USAID, however, attempted to turn it into a more genuine organization by channelling their cross-border humanitarian assistance through committees of the Alliance. This met only limited success.

Inside Afghanistan the alliance had little formal presence. The mujahidin were affiliated with the parties, and in some areas they developed means of cooperation either across broader regions or among the parties, but these locally based structures were not usually connected to the alliance of the exiled leaders.<sup>28</sup> The allegiance of the commanders to the exiled leaders ranged from the purely opportunistic (those who joined a party solely to



obtain weapons) to the committed (pre-war activists of the Islamist movement who continued their organizational involvement in a new form). Except for some in the border region who were in fact based in Pakistan, the mujahidin did not receive instructions from Peshawar; their relations with the party headquarters were characterized more by negotiation and expediency than hierarchical control.

### **The Geneva Accords and the "Second Track"**

For most of the war, the Pakistan and the U.S. governments regarded their support for the exile-led Afghan parties mainly as a way to increase the military and political costs of the Soviet intervention. Since they did not believe that the Soviets would withdraw, they were not very concerned with the capacity of the resistance organizations to organize a political alternative to the Kabul government.

This perspective changed by the end of 1987, when it was becoming clear that Gorbachev in fact intended to withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan through the U.N.-sponsored Geneva negotiations. Previously the U.S., Pakistan, and the parties they supported had not participated in various efforts to propose political changes in Kabul. The first public attempt to build a new legitimate government was made by Zahir Shah. In mid-1983, when it seemed that Soviet leader Yuri Andropov might successfully negotiate a Soviet pullout, Zahir Shah issued his first public declaration in ten years. At that time there was no functioning alliance of mujahidin, and Zahir Shah called on Afghans to unite to form a body that could represent them.<sup>29</sup> He made it clear that, if he were asked, he would be willing to head such a body in his personal capacity.<sup>30</sup> Some of his former ministers and diplomats, tribal leaders, and some supporters of the moderate resistance parties developed plans to hold a *Loya Jirga*, the traditional tribal assembly, with the ex-king presiding, and they had pressured him into finally taking a public stand. The Islamists, however, denounced these efforts as an attempt to restore the corrupt monarchy, and Pakistan refused to allow the *Jirga* to take place on Pakistani territory. In any case, as Andropov fell ill and the U.S. and Pakistan hardened their positions, the Geneva negotiations were stalemated.

The next proposal came from Moscow after the election of Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary of the CPSU. In a major speech on Soviet Asian policy delivered on July 28, 1986, Gorbachev called for the formation of an Afghan government "with the participation in it of those political forces which found themselves outside the country" — a reference to exiled resis-

tance leaders, refugees, and the former king. On December 30, 1986, after returning from a trip to Moscow accompanied by the entire Kabul leadership, Najibullah announced details of a proposal for "national reconciliation."<sup>31</sup>

In theory, the national reconciliation program envisaged a coalition government composed of all political elements, including the exiled resistance parties. For the first time, the Afghan Communists recognized the legitimacy of other organized political currents and offered them representation. In an attempt to split the internal resistance from the exiled leaders, Najibullah publicly appealed to major resistance commanders (some of whom his government had previously sentenced to death *in absentia*) to join the government.

There was little movement toward a new government until Gorbachev's speech February 8, 1988, which met Washington's demand for a short timetable and a "date certain" for withdrawal, and also countered a new position taken by Pakistan, or at least by President Zia. When he realized that the Soviets were about to meet the Americans' demands for a timetable, Zia seemingly reversed his position and stated that he did not want Pakistan to sign the agreement without the formation of an interim government.<sup>32</sup> Under strong Pakistani pressure and despite continuing sharp differences over the form of a future government of Afghanistan, the alliance announced on February 25 that it had agreed on a formula for an interim government, but it could not agree on even a partial cabinet until June 19. Indeed, according to diplomatic sources, the members of the alliance were utterly unable to reach agreement, and the final list of cabinet members was drawn up by an extremely frustrated Gen. Hamid Gul, director of the ISI, after he refused to let the seven leaders finish another meeting without reaching agreement.

The proposed government disappointed those who had hoped it would serve as a starting point for serious negotiations. It consisted almost solely of officials of the Peshawar parties and was dominated by radical Islamists. The head of the government, once again in deference to Saudi financial power, was Eng. Ahmad Shah, a member of Sayyaf's Wahhabi party. The "government" contained no resistance commanders from inside Afghanistan, no representative of the Shi 'a resistance parties,<sup>33</sup> and no important independent intellectuals or technocrats. Predictably, the proposal met with a cold reception from the Afghan refugees and resistance commanders.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, none of the resistance's sponsors extended recognition to the proposed "government."



ment in Kabul as well as the USSR, but in fact he met the demand of the mujahidin by not including any Afghan government representative in his delegation. This permitted them to sustain the belief in the illegitimacy of the Soviet-sponsored Afghan regime.

Vorontsov, however, did not agree to recognize the Peshawar alliance as the sole representative of exiled Afghan political forces. He also traveled to Teheran, where he met with the eight Shi'a parties recognized by Iran, and to Rome, where he met Zahir Shah. The Peshawar alliance denounced these meetings as an attempt to create division.

According to Vorontsov, out of these discussions a rough consensus emerged on a method for forming an interim government for Afghanistan. Instead of the *Loya Jirga*, a tribal-based national tradition which the Islamists rejected, the discussions centered on the Islamic concept of a *shura*, which had originally been proposed by Pakistan. This *shura*, of several hundred persons, would include representatives of the Peshawar and Iranian exiles, the ex-king, and delegates from Kabul. The main sticking point in the negotiations with the Soviets was over the nature of representation from Kabul. Vorontsov (and later, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze himself) insisted that these delegates would represent the PDPA, which the mujahidin rejected. The mujahidin broke off the talks over this issue in January.

### **The Afghan Shura of February 1989: An Interim Government of Exiles**

Despite the breakdown of negotiations with the Soviets, the Alliance proceeded to constitute its own *shura*. The seven parties proposed that each of the leaders would nominate 60 representatives to the *shura*, supposedly to be distributed among party workers, resistance commanders, refugees, and prominent exiles. This formula guaranteed that the Islamists would outnumber the traditionalists. The parties also agreed that 19 "good Muslims" from Kabul could attend, but these delegates were never named, and their seats remained empty. Participation by the ex-king having been rejected, the main remaining issue regarding the composition of the *shura* was the number of seats to be allotted to the Shi'a parties based in Iran.

This conflict was connected to the principal issue that initially faced the *shura*: what exactly it was supposed to do. The *shura* was convened without either an agenda or rules of procedure. ISI officers attended all meetings and gave many delegates the impression of being in control. The ISI, the Saudis,

After the signing of the agreement, on April 14, 1988, all the four state parties to the accords granted the U.N.'s negotiator, Diego Cordovez, a mandate to assist Afghans in the formation of a broad-based government. He eventually developed a proposal for the formation of a "National Government of Peace and Reconstruction." He suggested two stages: a "cooling off" period and a *Loya Jirga*. In the first, "leaders of all existing political parties would agree to postpone their active struggle as a patriotic sacrifice." During that period "A National Government for Peace and Reconstruction, consisting of Afghans of recognized independence and impartiality, [would] take office in Kabul. . . ."<sup>35</sup> The new Government would then prepare for the convening of a *Loya Jirga* under rules acceptable to all parties.

The Soviets and the PDPA never formally rejected the proposal. Mojaddedi and Gailani made supportive statements, as did a number of prominent Pashtun resistance commanders. The Islamist resistance leaders, however, rejected it, as did President Zia. American diplomats also disparaged it in press leaks. Mujahidin leaders sent several letters to U.N. Secretary General (S.G.) Perez de Cuellar complaining about Cordovez. In November, the S.G. concluded that Cordovez, who had become Foreign Minister of Ecuador in August, while retaining his role as the S.G.'s representative on Afghanistan, could no longer serve as an intermediary, and he removed the broad-based government from his brief. Although Perez de Cuellar had stated that he would take personal charge of the effort, in fact he left it to a middle-level U.N. official based in Pakistan.<sup>36</sup>

Into this breach stepped Yuli Vorontsov, who, besides being the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, had just been appointed ambassador to Kabul. His main task, apparently, was to oversee the final exit of Soviet troops and, if possible, the construction of a broad-based government acceptable to Moscow. After the announcement of the "suspension" of the Soviet troop withdrawal on November 15, Vorontsov proposed direct talks with exiled Afghan leaders. Such direct talks had been the main political demand the resistance leaders had made all along, and their absence had been their main objection to the diplomatic process thus far.

Such talks had first been proposed by the Soviets in July, ostensibly to discuss Soviet prisoners of war held by the mujahidin. After a first round of low-level talks in Islamabad, Moscow proposed discussions between Vorontsov and the leaders of the alliance in Saudi Arabia. The first such talks were held in Taif on December 3-4, 1988, and later continued in Islamabad. Vorontsov claimed that he was negotiating on behalf of the govern-



and the Islamist leaders wanted the function of the *shura* to be limited to approving the "interim government" chosen the previous year. Hence they wanted to be sure of a majority in favor, which they would have without the Shi'a, given the four to three distribution derived from the structure of the alliance. However, even though the Shi'a parties recognized by Iran were also Islamist, they would be sure to oppose any government headed by a Wahhabi such as Ahmad Shah (the Wahhabis are among the most anti-Shi 'a of all Sunni Muslims, and Saudi Arabia, the main patron of the Wahhabis, is the major opponent of Khomeini's Iran within the Islamic world.) Hence the moderates had at least a short-term common interest with the Shi 'a in allotting the latter enough seats to defeat the government of Eng. Ahmad Shah. The Sunni Islamists, on the other hand, wished to keep the number of Shi 'a delegates small.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, one of Saudi Arabia's main foreign policy goals is to contain the influence of the Iranian revolution within the Islamic world, and Saudi representatives ultimately weighed in heavily against strong representation for the Shi 'a. Iran, on the other hand, saw in the *shura* a way to assert its influence in Afghanistan, a task which for ten years had been eclipsed by the recently concluded war with Iraq.

The Sunni and Shi 'a alliances had had virtually no contact throughout the war, but Vorontsov's meeting with both had forced them to consult with each other. The negotiation process was complex and drawn out, including trips to Pakistan by the Shi 'a leaders as well as Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati and trips to Iran first by Rabbani and Mojaddedi in January and then by Mojaddedi (who was then alliance spokesman) in February. During this visit Mojaddedi and the Qom alliance reached agreement on representation of 120 delegates (the equivalent of two parties), which would have given the anti-Wahhabi forces a 5 to 4 advantage.

On his return to Pakistan, the Islamist leaders charged Mojaddedi with acting without authorization and refused to accept the agreement. The Saudis also weighed in with their influence and money. According to U.S. diplomats in Riyadh, the Saudi intelligence service spent \$26 million per week during the *shura*. Other sources mention that each delegate received at least \$25,000.<sup>38</sup> One of the results of these expenditures was that, finally, none of the Shi'a parties supported by Iran participated in the *shura*, a result which seemed to satisfy the Saudis. The U.S. might not have been displeased with this outcome either, but it maintained a low public profile.

Hence, when the *shura* finally convened in Rawalpindi on

February 10, 1989, it was clearly not a broad-based body but one chosen by the leaders of the seven Sunni parties, who acted as a collective presidium. Mohammadi chaired the meeting, and Sayyaf acted as spokesman.<sup>39</sup> The ISI and the Pakistani Foreign Ministry had prevailed on the parties to each nominate five members from Afghan exiles outside of Pakistan (from Europe, America, or the Middle East), but most of those so named were merely foreign representatives of the parties. There were eight or nine such delegates who considered themselves genuinely independent and met as a caucus.

The Pakistanis and Saudis exercised their influence and control in different ways, but obviously enough that many Afghans ultimately rejected the outcome. First, even the process of nomination of delegates by the party leaders was not considered adequate to ensure control; there was also a screening committee, the origin of which remains obscure, which had to approve each delegate as a "good Muslim." According to members of moderate-traditionalist parties, this committee met in a Pakistani army barracks, and ISI officers participated in its deliberations. It rejected the credentials of Humayun Assefy, a former diplomat and a relative of Zahir Shah.<sup>40</sup> Events surrounding the *shura* also made it clear that pro-Zahir Shah forces would not be permitted to participate. Two days before the opening of the *shura* about fifty men shouting slogans in favor of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar violently broke up a Peshawar rally of several thousand people in favor of Zahir Shah as Pakistani police looked on.

Second, the ISI was in charge of all the security arrangements, and its officers openly attended all meetings, giving several delegates the impression that they were in charge. They also summoned various delegates for consultations from time to time. Furthermore, most of the delegates stayed in the Hajj camp in Rawalpindi, a large complex which was closed to journalists and other outsiders. The only foreigners permitted to enter during the entire period were ISI officers and a certain number of Arabs, presumably Saudis.

As noted above, the Islamists intended that the only function of the *shura* would be to approve the government of Eng. Ahmad Shah. Some delegates objected that the *shura* was only consultative — it had been appointed by seven persons, not elected by the nation — and hence did not have the authority to choose a government. On the third day of sessions, when Sayyaf announced that the meeting would now approve that government, as one delegate described it, "a storm broke out among the participants." While many people were shouting various things, one of the most common themes was that there should not be any



Wahhabis in the government. The chair lost control, and the meeting was suspended.

The Pakistanis and Saudis reasserted control by the end two weeks later, but at the cost of making their influence much more obvious. First the ISI convened a meeting of the seven leaders. The leaders then agreed to appoint a committee of 70 to make a proposal to the *shura*; this committee was then reduced to a group of 14, two from each party. The group of 14 was spirited away in the custody of the ISI and met in secret.

It returned with a proposal for sharing cabinet positions among the seven leaders and their parties according to the results of an election. Each member of the *shura* was to vote for two of the seven party leaders. The leader with the highest number of votes would be president, who would act as spokesman and represent the government abroad. The second highest votegetter would be prime minister, who would actually be in charge of running the government. Other major ministries were to be apportioned among the remaining five leaders.<sup>41</sup>

According to delegates to the *shura*, rather than leave this process to the Afghans, the ISI and the Saudis tried to manipulate the vote through various forms of pressure, including bribes, to assure that the outcome would be to their liking. It is not clear whether the election of Mojaddedi as the president coincided with their wishes, but at least the Pakistani Foreign Ministry was not displeased. Mojaddedi projected a moderate image which might appeal to both the West and Afghans in Kabul; he spoke good French, English, and Arabic, and also had a relatively good relationship with the Shi 'a groups, who would eventually have to be brought in. He received 174 votes, the highest number. Mohammadi had apparently been led to believe that his being chosen as chair of the *shura* would presage his being selected for head of state, and he was somewhat frustrated at this outcome, which led to some further disruption (see below).

The Saudis may have wanted their candidate, Sayyaf, to be the president, but they were satisfied with his election as prime minister with 173 votes. This outcome contrasted strongly with the violent anti-Wahhabi reaction earlier, and at least some participants attribute the difference to Saudi money. Mohammadi, a well-known jurist, came in third as head of the supreme court. The ISI may have wanted Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to finish higher than he did, but he came in fourth and was named defense minister. Khaled received the positions of state security and internal affairs,<sup>42</sup> Rabbani the foreign ministry, and Gailani, the moderate considered closest to Zahir Shah, the ministries of reconstruction and education.<sup>43</sup>

Mohammadi, however, disrupted the outcome by using a procedural rule that the committee of 14 had proposed. According to this rule, any leader could take any post lower on the list than the one he had won, and Mohammadi asked for the Defense Ministry. This infuriated Gulbuddin. There were two days of negotiations, and the dispute was finally settled in the office of Gen. Hamid Gul. Gulbuddin got Rabbani's place as foreign minister, Gailani became head of the supreme court, and Rabbani received the ministries of reconstruction and education. Rabbani reportedly felt that he and his Tajik constituency had been squeezed out of power by the Pashtuns, with the support of Pakistan.

### **In Quest of Recognition**

The proposed "government" did not directly control any personnel, population, or territory. The war was still being waged by mujahidin more or less affiliated to the seven parties and who had no links to the interim government except through those parties. While some in Washington advocated distributing weapons through the new "Minister of Defense," the "ministry" in fact had no such capability, and the seven parties alone continued to transfer and distribute external aid.

The credibility of the interim government depended on its ability to demonstrate control of territory and population inside Afghanistan and to obtain international recognition. On both scores, its performance in the first months of its existence fell far short of its sponsors' expectations or at least hopes.

Since the mujahidin claimed to control the vast majority of territory of Afghanistan, the interim government claimed not to be a government-in-exile. It proclaimed its intention to move inside Afghanistan and hold elections within six months. It sought to hold its first meeting on Afghan territory.<sup>44</sup> The meeting, however, was more a media event than an actual cabinet meeting. Rabbani and Gailani did not attend, and little if any business was conducted.

The interim government and its supporters, especially the ISI, hoped that, soon after the completion of the Soviet withdrawal, it would be able to move inside Afghanistan more permanently in the wake of major military victories. In particular, the alliance seemed to hope that it would be able to move to Jalalabad. The alliance, however, has no joint military staff capable of strategic planning on a nation-wide basis, nor does it have the command and control capabilities necessary to coordinate a national offensive to seize the government's strategic points. Such shortcomings had not been serious obstacles to



fighting a guerrilla resistance, but they had to be overcome in order to win a conventional battle for cities and garrisons. Rather than wait for the resistance to develop such capabilities — a somewhat dubious prospect in any event, at least among the feuding commanders of the border tribal zones — the ISI stepped in and made plans for an offensive.

In early February, the author was told by commanders in the Jalalabad area that the ISI was already establishing a plan for an assault, despite the misgivings of many of the commanders in the area. The ISI similarly summoned commanders in the Qandahar area to a meeting and offered them money and weapons if they would agree to attack the garrison and the government-held parts of the city. In Qandahar, where the traditional tribal forces are still strong and are in communication with the government garrison, the mujahidin refused. Around Jalalabad, however, where the Islamists are stronger, the tribal organization is weaker, and Peshawar is much closer, the commanders eventually agreed. It appears that the timing of the assault was meant to coincide with the mid-March meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The plan apparently was to move the interim government into Jalalabad and request recognition from the OIC.

In the event, while the offensive did capture some fortified targets and disabled part of the airport, it failed to take Jalalabad city. The interim government nonetheless won recognition from Saudi Arabia (and hence Bahrain). Furthermore, the interim government's foreign minister, Gulbuddin Hedmatyar, attended the OIC meeting and was granted Afghanistan's seat, which had been left empty since the Soviet intervention. The OIC, of course, was largely influenced by the Saudi decision, which reflected the Saudi approval of the composition of the interim government, and especially its exclusion of the Iranian-sponsored groups. Soon after the OIC meeting the interim government was also recognized by Sudan and Malaysia.<sup>45</sup>

Neither Pakistan nor the United States, interestingly enough, recognized the interim government, although there were internal debates in both countries on what approach to take. Despite their active role in supporting the mujahidin and their denunciation of the government in Kabul as illegitimate, neither country had broken diplomatic relations with the latter. Although neither country had sent an ambassador to Kabul since 1979, both retained a diplomatic mission there until 1989, and neither has closed the Afghan government's missions in their own country. There is even an Afghan consulate in the University Town area of Peshawar, just around the corner from the head-

quarters of the alliance.

In the U.S., Congressional forces led by Sen. Gordon Humphrey (Republican - New Hampshire) have long advocated that Washington break relations with Kabul and recognize the mujahidin. The State Department has countered that it did not conduct political business with Kabul, but that it was in the interest of the United States to keep a mission there to collect intelligence. Furthermore, the State Department argued, the alliance, and now the interim government, does not have the minimal criteria required by U.S. policy for recognition, namely effective administrative control of territory and population and the ability to carry out the international obligations of Afghanistan.

Since the establishment of the interim government, Humphrey and others have argued that, even if the U.S. does not (yet) recognize it as a government, it should at least send an ambassadorial level appointee to conduct relations with it. The U.S. embassy in Islamabad had for several years included a "special envoy" responsible for relations with the resistance, but this official reported through the Ambassador to Pakistan. Supporters of direct dealings with the interim government hope that such a relationship will enable the U.S. to pursue a more independent policy, rather than simply support Pakistan's.<sup>46</sup>

In Pakistan the debate over recognition of the interim government coincides to some extent with the major political cleavage, that between the Bhutto government and the supporters of the late President Zia and his "Islamization" policies. Several of the Islamic parties in Pakistan have called for recognition of the mujahidin government. The Pakistani government has argued that it cannot recognize the interim government because of its obligation under the Geneva accords not to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, but this does not seem very convincing in view of the government's flouting of other provisions of the same accords, notably by assisting and influencing the organization of the *shura* as well as by continuing to supply the mujahidin. The government's position may reflect a split between the Bhutto government and its foreign ministry on the one hand and, on the other, the military and intelligence agencies that have mainly controlled Afghan policy. Following the removal of Gen. Gul as ISI director in June 1989 (which was mainly dictated by domestic Pakistani politics) the foreign ministry and prime minister's office may play a larger role.

These disputes might have become moot had Jalalabad and other cities fallen, but no major centers have been taken over by mujahidin since the final withdrawal of Soviet troops. (Several



provincial capitals had fallen to them at the beginning of the withdrawal, including those of Bamiyan, Takhar, and Kunar.) There are several reasons for this. Militarily, the mujahidin, as noted, do not have the command and control needed to mount major conventional attacks, nor do they have the heavy weapons needed to attack fortified concrete bunkers, although their rockets can destroy (and have destroyed) civilian homes and civilian government buildings.

Many analysts, however, including this one, thought that such military capabilities would not be necessary, because of the political weakness of the Kabul government, which had functioned for years as the umbrella for the Soviet forces. The mujahidin and their supporters anticipated mass defections leading to a crumbling of the regime from within. Instead, the regime's soldiers and militia have generally fought with considerable determination, more, in fact than they seem to have shown while Soviet troops were fighting alongside them.

The main reason seems to lie in the political weakness of the mujahidin themselves. Their lack of unity and the lack of credibility of the interim government they have proposed have prevented the latter from posing a serious alternative to the Kabul regime as a defender of Afghanistan's national interests. The government has publicized the involvement of Pakistani and Arab forces with the mujahidin and has sought to portray them as foreign agents. While some specific charges are exaggerated (such as the charge that Pakistani soldiers are actually fighting inside Afghanistan, although intelligence agents are doubtless present), the overall picture of the exiled leaders' dependence on foreign support is not inaccurate. At the same time Najibullah has intensified initiatives aimed at attracting support of or at least neutralizing the internal commanders. He evinces sympathy for the sufferings they have undergone, compared with the comforts of foreign supported exile, and has offered to supply them with all the resources they need for their areas.

The behavior of the mujahidin and of some of the Arab (mainly Wahhabi) volunteers who accompany them has also helped convince many of those on the government side to fight on. In one well-publicized case in November 1988, mujahidin from Hezb-e Islami (Khales) massacred over 70 members of a government garrison *which had defected*. Despite condemnation of this action by the resistance leaders, such actions have been repeated, including during the course of the battle for Jalalabad.

Furthermore, in many areas taken over by mujahidin after the withdrawal of Soviet troops there was, at least initially, a breakdown of civil order, followed by looting, arbitrary killings

of people associated with the government, and rapes and killings of unveiled women or women who were members of the family of real or supposed government supporters. Such incidents occurred in Kunduz (which was subsequently recaptured by the government), Asadabad (capital of Kunar), Taleghan (capital of Takhar), and elsewhere.

In some cases these abuses resulted from indiscipline, but in others they were justified on principle. The Wahhabis, and particularly the Arab volunteers who increasingly accompany them, argue that areas of Afghanistan controlled by the Communist government constitute non-Muslim territory, and that their inhabitants, who have refused the call of Islam, may be subjected to the laws of *futuhat*, or conquest. According to these laws, which originated in Arab tribal customs of the time of Mohammad, the men of such a territory may be executed, their women and children enslaved, and their property confiscated as booty.<sup>47</sup>

News of these atrocities has spread, and the government has naturally helped to diffuse them. The inhabitants of the government-controlled areas, whatever their political or religious views, fear that a victory of the mujahidin could mean death or dishonor for them. Hence there are reports that many in Kabul feel trapped or that the current government, even if they hate it, may be better than the currently available alternative. This is especially true of women, but it applies to some extent to the entire educated middle class. The PDPA is thus increasingly able to cast itself as the only capable defender of the Afghan nationalist and modernist tradition stretching back to Tarzi.

Many Afghans and others argue that ultimately the fate of the country will be determined by the commanders, such as Massoud, who have actual power bases inside the country, rather than by either the exiled leaders or the PDPA. The commanders, however, still face the problem which leaders of indigenous revolts faced in Afghanistan's past: all of them lead a more or less narrow segment of the society, and none of them can bring the others together. Nor can any of them mobilize the resources on his own to form a dominant army. This is why exiles with foreign assistance have so often been able to step in and rule, from Dost Mohammad to Nadir Shah. The rulers who took power after the first and second Anglo-Afghan wars were not themselves the leaders of the anti-British struggles, but exiles who managed to form alliances with feuding tribal military forces.

At that time, however, the tribal system was the basis of military and political power in the region. Today the tribal system has decayed (unevenly, and to different extents in different



regions), and the technology of modern warfare has both accelerated the decline of the traditional society and replaced it with a different form of organization of armed men: guerrillas funded by ideologically motivated political organizations. To unite these groupings and manage the military activity of contemporary warfare requires more elaborate forms of leadership and organization. Thus far neither the exile leaders of the Afghan mujahidin nor the former king have shown their capabilities in these areas to be the equal to the devotion and bravery of the fighters at the front. Whether any of these exiles will be able to master these skills as effectively as the mujahidin learned to use Stinger missiles remains to be seen.

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#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973); Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969).

<sup>2</sup>For an overview of state formation in Afghanistan see B. R. Rubin, "Lineages of the State in Afghanistan," *Asian Survey* 28 (November 1988), pp. 1188-1209; on the resource base of Ahmad Shah's rule see Y. V. Gankovsky, "The Durrani Empire: Taxes and Tax System, State Incomes and Expenditure," in Social Sciences Today Editorial Board, eds., *Afghanistan Past and Present* (Moscow: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1981), pp. 85-102.

<sup>3</sup>Both rulers, however, evinced considerable independence of the powers in whose territory they had dwelt.

<sup>4</sup>Dost Mohammad's son Wazir Akbar Khan had played an important role in mobilizing the tribes, so that the exiled king was indirectly connected to the uprising.

<sup>5</sup>Hasan Kakar, *Afghanistan: A Study in Internal Political Development, 1880-1901* (Lahore: Panjab University Press, 1971).

<sup>6</sup>While it is outside the scope of this study, it is interesting to note that the Amir also used domestic exile extensively as a means of collective punishment for Pashtun tribes who revolted against him. (This contrasted with his less favorable treatment of the Shi 'a Hazaras, who were dispossessed of their land and sold into slavery.) The Amir forcibly moved a number of such tribes away from their homelands (*watan*) to other areas, mainly

non-Pashtun ones, where they were simultaneously deprived of their traditional base of power and available for his use as allies against the indigenous non-Pashtun populations. On these relocations see Nancy Tapper, "Abd al-Rahman's North-West Frontier: The Pashtun Colonisation of Afghan Turkistan," in Richard Tapper, ed., *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan* (London: Croom Helm, 1983).

<sup>7</sup>See Hasan Kakar, *Government and Society in Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979) on the Amir's prisons.

<sup>8</sup>Dupree, *Afghanistan*, p. 438.

<sup>9</sup>The most thorough study of Amanullah's reign is Leon Poullada, *Reform and Rebellion in Afghanistan, 1919-1929* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1973).

<sup>10</sup>Amir Habibullah was commonly known, especially to his opponents, as Bacha-e Saqao, son of the water carrier.

<sup>11</sup>The French exile background of the Musahiban dynasty explains the conventional French spelling of the name — Daoud, rather than Daud or Dawud.

<sup>12</sup>See below on Zahir Shah's "activities" (if that is the right word) since 1983.

<sup>13</sup>Dr. Tawana, "Memoirs of Islamic Movement," *AFGHANews* (May 1989).

<sup>14</sup>*New York Times*, April 30, 1989.

<sup>15</sup>For an account by a participant see Mohammad Es'haq "Memoirs of Islamic Movement," *AFGHANews* (March 1989).

<sup>16</sup>For more extensive discussions of factionalism in the PDPA see Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq* (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1983); Olivier Roy, "Le Double Code Afghan: Marxisme et Tribalisme," *Revue Francaise de Science Politique* (December 1986), pp. 846-861; and Raja Anwar, *The Tragedy of Afghanistan: A First-hand Account* (Khalid Hasan, tr.) (London: Verso, 1988).

<sup>17</sup>These included Babrak Karmal, his step-brother Mahmud Baryalai, his reported mistress, Anahita Ratebzad, Nur Ahmad Nur, Baryalai's long-time associate Abdul Wakil, and Babrak's successor, Najibullah (then known only as Najib).

<sup>18</sup>A Soviet scholar of Afghanistan speaking in the U.S. stated that Western scholars were wrong when they claimed that Babrak gave the speech from Tashkent; "it was Dushanbe," he stated.

<sup>19</sup>Mohammad Sarwari, for instance, was sent as ambassador to Mongolia, where he still serves.

<sup>20</sup>At least, this is the most commonly given explanation. A generally frank Soviet specialist on Afghanistan told the author



that Gulabzoi's exile had to do with "personal problems," rather than political conflict.

<sup>21</sup>While various exiled Islamists claim that they were first to begin "*jihad*" against the Communists, the first actual armed revolt against the government, in July 1978, took place in Nuristan and had absolutely no connection to the exiles in Pakistan. Other revolts, however, such as those in Badakhshan, Herat, and Panjsher, appear to have been started by returning Islamist exiles. See M. Nazif Shahrani, "Causes and Context of Responses to the Saur Revolution in Badakhshan," in M. Nazif Shahrani and Robert Canfield, *Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan: Anthropological Perspectives* (Berkeley: University of California Institute of International Studies, 1984), pp. 139-169; Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

<sup>22</sup>Sibghatullah had been imprisoned for four years by Daoud on charges of planning to assassinate Khrushchev during the latter's visit to Afghanistan in 1955. Mojaddedi had indeed been a vocal opponent of the visit and the close relations with the USSR that it cemented, but the truth of the specific charges is questionable. Mojaddedi also studied in Egypt and had Muslim Brotherhood contacts, but he did not seem to adopt the more radical elements of their ideology and never claimed, for instance, that the pre-1978 (or at least pre-1973) governments of Afghanistan were non-Islamic. He moved abroad after his release from prison in 1959.

<sup>23</sup>According to Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, this uprising was organized by members of Jamiat-e Islami who had returned clandestinely from exile in Iran and made contact with army officers, who succeeded in seizing the garrison for several days.

<sup>24</sup>Mojaddedi, Mohammadi, and Sayyaf all became leaders in this way.

<sup>25</sup>Sayyaf had been arrested in Kabul and was released from Pol-e Charkhi Prison after the Soviet invasion. Although he was a known activist of the Islamist movement, he apparently escaped execution because he was a fellow tribesman of Hafizullah Amin. Sayyaf's original name was Abd-ur-Rasul, meaning servant of (or even worshipper of) the Prophet. In line with Wahhabi teachings, which oppose the attribution to Mohammad of superhuman characteristics, he changed his name to Abd-ur-Rabb-ur-Rasul, meaning servant (worshipper) of the Master of the Prophet.

<sup>26</sup>This may be one of the reasons that only the Islamist parties have significant presences north of the Hindu Kush, and that their support there has increased throughout the war.

<sup>27</sup>In Persian, Ittehad-e Islami-ye Mujahidin Afghanistan, often mistranslated as Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahidin. In popular parlance, "Afghan" is still an ethnic term meaning Pashtun. "Afghanistan" is a more neutral geographical designation.

<sup>28</sup>This changed to a certain extent by 1988. In some provinces taken by mujahidin after the withdrawal of Soviet troops, they established a transitional government based on a *shura* of the commanders of the seven parties in the Alliance.

<sup>29</sup>"Afghanistan: Declaration du Roi Zahir Chah," *Le Monde*, June 22, 1983.

<sup>30</sup>Zahir Shah stated that he had no interest in trying to restore the monarchy, but Afghans know that his father had similarly disavowed any interest in becoming king. In any case, many believe that Abdul Wali, at least, is interested in restoring the monarchy.

<sup>31</sup>*National Reconciliation: Documents* (Kabul: State Printing House, January 3, 1987).

<sup>32</sup>The civilian government of Pakistan led by Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo, as well as the U.S., however, preferred to go ahead and get the Soviets to sign off on their commitment to withdraw without waiting for Afghans to reach agreement about their future. They eventually dropped this demand, and it did not affect the structure of the final agreement. Junejo's effectively cutting Zia out of the decision contributed to Zia's decision to dismiss his government on May 29 and support continued military aid to the mujahidin after May 15.

<sup>33</sup>The population of Afghanistan is over 99 percent Muslim, and of the Muslims, about 20 percent are Shi'a. Most of the Shi'a belong to the low-status Hazara ethnic group whose homeland is in the central highlands (Hazarajat) and furnish the capital with much of its casual labor. The Peshawar alliance consists of seven Sunni parties. There is an alliance of eight Shi'a parties based in Teheran.

<sup>34</sup>"Un gouvernement introuvable," *Defis Afghans* (February-June 1988), pp. 14-15.

<sup>35</sup>"Notes used by Under-Secretary-General Diego Cordovez, Representative of the Secretary-General, on the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan during a Press Conference held in Islamabad on Saturday 9 July 1988," mimeograph, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup>The official, Benon Sevan, was promoted to Assistant Secretary General in early 1989.

<sup>37</sup>Among the Islamists, Sayyaf and especially Khales are known for being particularly anti-Shi'a. Rabbani, on the con-



trary, is relatively tolerant and has even advocated recognition of the Shi'a's version of Islamic law (*fiqh-e Ja 'afariyya*) as valid for disputes among the Shi'a.

<sup>39</sup>Richard Cronin, "Afghanistan after the Soviet Withdrawal: Contenders for Power," Congressional Research Service, May 1989.

<sup>39</sup>On the first day of the *shura* Sayyaf announced these appointments to the assembly, and there was no discussion or vote. The next day the Afghan News Agency operated by Hekmatyar's party with the aid of the Pakistani Jama 'at-i Islami reported that they had been "elected."

<sup>40</sup>Assefy, who lives in Paris, is Zahir Shah's paternal second cousin (he and Zahir Shah are both descended in direct male line from a common great-grandfather). Zahir Shah's wife, Humaira, is also Assefy's half-sister.

<sup>41</sup>The proposed order of priority was: president; prime minister; head of supreme court; defense; state security and internal affairs; foreign affairs; reconstruction and education.

<sup>42</sup>The Ministry of State Security was established only in 1986, when the Kabul government's KGB-trained secret police, KhAD (the State Information Services) was upgraded from a department of the Prime Minister's office to a separate ministry. Some in the resistance had advocated abolishing it and restoring all internal security and law enforcement functions to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but the *shura* did not discuss this issue.

<sup>43</sup>The ISI locked the doors of the hall during the voting, but several of the expatriates nonetheless managed to walk out. Others refused to attend. They protested that the outcome did not represent the will of the Afghan people or even the mujahidin but of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

<sup>44</sup>The claim was not really inaccurate, but it did not have the meanings that many might infer from it. Most areas of rural Afghanistan were and are under the de facto control of local mujahidin more or less affiliated with the exiled parties. The parties, however, exercise no administrative control over the local groups. Furthermore, since the mujahidin by and large still do not have either heavy weapons capable of destroying well-fortified positions or effective defenses against air power, the government is able to maintain and supply a network of garrisons as well as to attack virtually any point where something particularly threatening is occurring, such as a meeting of a rival "government."

<sup>45</sup>Both Sudan and Malaysia are countries with Muslim majorities and strong non-Islamic minorities. Both also have

growing Wahhabi-influenced Islamic revival movements. The recognition of the Afghan government was a political concession to the Islamist groups in both countries that was politically easier to implement than the enactment of *shari'a* legislation.

<sup>46</sup>Another interpretation is that what has here been called the policy of Pakistan or the ISI is in fact the policy of the CIA, which has managed to stay behind the scenes. In this view, U.S. policy is not the captive of the ISI, but of the CIA. The author has no evidence one way or the other.

<sup>47</sup>The most prominent Afghan to have endorsed this position is Jamil-ur-Rahman, leader of a Wahhabi group in Kunar. Jamil-ur-Rahman's group (Jama'at-ud-Da'awa al-Quran wa Ahl-ul-Hadith) is independent of the seven alliance parties and receives direct aid from private Wahhabi sources. There are several hundred Arabs fighting with his group who have been charged by the Afghans with slaughter of captured government militia members, rape, and trafficking in women.